

BRITISH
TEXTILE
BIENNIAL

62 GROUP BRIEF

SUPERSLOWWAY



Supported using public funding by
**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

Background:

The British Textile Biennial (BTB) showcases the nation's creativity, innovation and expression in textiles against the backdrop of the impressive infrastructure of the cotton industry in Pennine Lancashire. Once again, BTB 2021 invites artists to co-create with the communities that live here, often using the spaces that the textile industry created to present the results.

With its epic mills and grandiose civic architecture along the country's longest waterway, the Leeds & Liverpool Canal, the landscape tells the story of textiles. This biennial festival explores that history and its contemporary context with the community that has textiles in its DNA.

The British Textile Biennial has grown out of Super Slow Way, the Creative People & Places programme in Pennine Lancashire. Super Slow Way's approach to commissioning, with co-creation and community collaboration at its heart, has shaped BTB's development to become a valued offer within Lancashire's arts calendar and an opportunity for a diversity of cultural expression within our communities. The 2019 biennial saw audiences of over 50,000 people visit 30 exhibitions, events and performances across the area.

Super Slow Way and the British Textile Biennial are committed to ensuring diverse representation across our programmes, through the artists we work with, the communities we connect with and the places we shape as new spaces for cultural connection and conversation.



The Brief

We are excited to invite 62 Group artists to develop new work that explores our theme for the next biennial, to form an important exhibition within one of our venues, as a key part of our programme.

In 2021 we turn our attention to the global nature of textiles, textile production and the relationships it creates both historically and now.

Most people who live in East Lancashire do so because the textile industry brought them here, whether from all over the British Isles in the 19th century when our towns were the fastest growing in the country or in the latter half of the 20th century when workers came from across the Indian sub-continent to work in the cotton mills. Now most of the mills have closed, Boohoo.com is one of the biggest employers in the area and imports and distributes clothing that is often made in Asia while the grandchildren of the former mill workers make up the majority of its staff. The phenomenon of fast fashion is creating new relationships across the world, with single use garments often ending up in Africa to create a new recycling industry and new narratives of decolonisation.

Works submitted should respond to this context, or reflect your own personal histories, geography, and political context – resulting from the impact of textiles on people & place.

The backdrop of our industrial heritage offers a rich and resonant 'canvas' to work within and the resulting exhibition will be sited within one of our heritage spaces – the exact location is yet to be confirmed given the current Covid-19 situation, so there may be some technical information provided at a later date to support you in decisions about scale, hanging and presentation of works.



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www.britishtextilebiennial.co.uk

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